

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Please amend the claims as follows, this listing of the claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Canceled)
2. (Currently amended) The apparatus according to ~~claim 1~~ claim 5, wherein said stiffening device is a tongue-shaped slit tongue.
3. (Currently amended) The apparatus according to ~~claim 1~~ claim 5, wherein said stiffening device is a shoehorn-shaped slit tongue.
4. (Currently amended) The apparatus according to ~~claim 1~~ claim 5, wherein said stiffening device is also provided in a region of the cuff to support and to shape the cuff during pressing.
5. (Currently amended) ~~The apparatus according to claim 1,~~ An apparatus for pressing items of clothing having sleeves with cuffs and a slit disposed above the cuff, comprising:  
a pressing dummy having an inflatable bag projecting into a region of the cuffs of the clothing item when the clothing item is place on the dummy for drying, supporting, and shaping the sleeve during a pressing operation;  
a stiffening device supporting and shaping the clothing item in a region of the slit during the pressing operation; and  
wherein said stiffening device is air-permeable.
6. (Currently amended) The apparatus according to ~~claim 1~~ claim 5, wherein said stiffening device has at least one air hole.

7. (Currently amended) The apparatus according to ~~claim 4~~ claim 5, wherein:  
said inflatable bag is of a material; and  
said stiffening device is disposed in said material of said inflatable bag.
8. (Currently amended) ~~The apparatus according to claim 1,~~ An apparatus for pressing items of clothing having sleeves with cuffs and a slit disposed above the cuff, comprising:  
a pressing dummy having an inflatable bag projecting into a region of the cuffs of the clothing item when the clothing item is place on the dummy for drying, supporting, and shaping the sleeve during a pressing operation;  
a stiffening device supporting and shaping the clothing item in a region of the slit during the pressing operation; and  
wherein said stiffening device is fastened on said inflatable bag.
9. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 8, wherein:  
said inflatable bag has a tab fitted thereon;  
said stiffening device has ends; and  
said tab retains said stiffening device by at least one of said ends.
10. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 8, wherein:  
said stiffening device has ends; and  
said stiffening device is a slit tongue and is fitted by at least one of said ends directly on said inflatable bag.
11. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 9, wherein said stiffening device is a slit tongue and is fitted by at least one of said ends directly on said inflatable bag.

12. (Currently amended) ~~The apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising~~ An apparatus for pressing items of clothing having sleeves with cuffs and a slit disposed above the cuff, comprising:

a pressing dummy having an inflatable bag projecting into a region of the cuffs of the clothing item when the clothing item is place on the dummy for drying, supporting, and shaping the sleeve during a pressing operation;

a stiffening device supporting and shaping the clothing item in a region of the slit during the pressing operation; and

a clip for fixing the cuff integrally formed on said stiffening device.

13. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 12, wherein said clip is air-permeable.

14. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 12, wherein said clip has at least one air hole.

15. (Currently amended) The apparatus according to ~~claim 1~~ claim 5, wherein said inflatable bag has an end region adjacent the cuff when in the pressing operation and an air-impermeable region at said end region.

16. (Currently amended) ~~The apparatus according to claim 1,~~ An apparatus for pressing items of clothing having sleeves with cuffs and a slit disposed above the cuff, comprising:

a pressing dummy having an inflatable bag projecting into a region of the cuffs of the clothing item when the clothing item is place on the dummy for drying, supporting, and shaping the sleeve during a pressing operation;

a stiffening device supporting and shaping the clothing item in a region of the slit during the pressing operation; and

wherein said stiffening device has an inner tensioning mechanism in a region of the cuff when in the pressing operation.

17. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 4, wherein said stiffening device has an inner tensioning mechanism in a region of the cuff when in the pressing operation.

18. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 16, wherein said tensioning mechanism has two tensioning jaws supported one upon another.

19. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 17, wherein said tensioning mechanism has two tensioning jaws supported one upon another.

20. (Currently amended) The apparatus according to ~~claim 4~~ claim 5, wherein the clothing item is a shirt or a blouse.

Claims 21-23 (Canceled)

24. (Currently amended) The method according to ~~claim 23~~ claim 27, which further comprises providing the pressing dummy with a tongue-shaped slit tongue as the stiffening device.

25. (Currently amended) The method according to ~~claim 23~~ claim 27, which further comprises providing the pressing dummy with a shoehorn-shaped slit tongue as the stiffening device.

26. (Currently amended) The method according to ~~claim 23~~ claim 27, which further comprises supporting and shaping the cuff during pressing by providing the stiffening device in a region of the cuff.

27. (Currently amended) ~~The method according to claim 23, which further comprises~~ A method for pressing items of clothing, which comprises:  
placing a clothing item having sleeves with cuffs and a slit disposed above the cuff on a pressing dummy; and  
carrying out a pressing operation of the item by:  
projecting an inflatable bag of the pressing dummy into a region of the cuffs when the item is placed on the dummy for drying;  
supporting and shaping the sleeve with the inflatable bag during the pressing operation; and  
supporting and shaping a region of the slit with a stiffening device during the pressing operation; and  
providing the stiffening device as an air-permeable stiffening device.

28. (Currently amended) The method according to ~~claim 23~~ claim 27, which further comprises providing the stiffening device with at least one air hole.

29. (Currently amended) The method according to ~~claim 23~~ claim 27, which further comprises placing the stiffening device in a material of the inflatable bag.

30. (Currently amended) The method according to ~~claim 23~~ claim 27, which further comprises fastening the stiffening device on the inflatable bag.

31. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 30, which further comprises:  
fitting a tab on the inflatable bag; and  
retaining the stiffening device with the tab by at least one end of the stiffening device.

32. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 30, which further comprises:

providing the stiffening device as a slit tongue; and  
fitting the slit tongue by at least one of the ends thereof directly on the inflatable bag.

33. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 31, which further comprises removably fixing the cuff with a clip integrally formed on the stiffening device.

34. (Currently amended) The method according to ~~claim 23~~, claim 27, which further comprises:

providing an end region of the inflatable bag adjacent the cuff during the pressing operation; and  
providing the end region with an air-impermeable region.

35. (Currently amended) The method according to ~~claim 23~~ claim 27, which further comprises providing the stiffening device with an inner tensioning mechanism in a region of the cuff during the pressing operation.

36. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 26, which further comprises providing the stiffening device with an inner tensioning mechanism in a region of the cuff during the pressing operation.

37. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 35, which further comprises providing the tensioning mechanism with two tensioning jaws supported one upon another.

38. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 36, which further comprises providing the tensioning mechanism with two tensioning jaws supported one upon another.

39. (Currently amended) The method according to ~~claim 23~~ claim 27,  
providing the clothing item as a shirt or a blouse.

40. (Canceled)